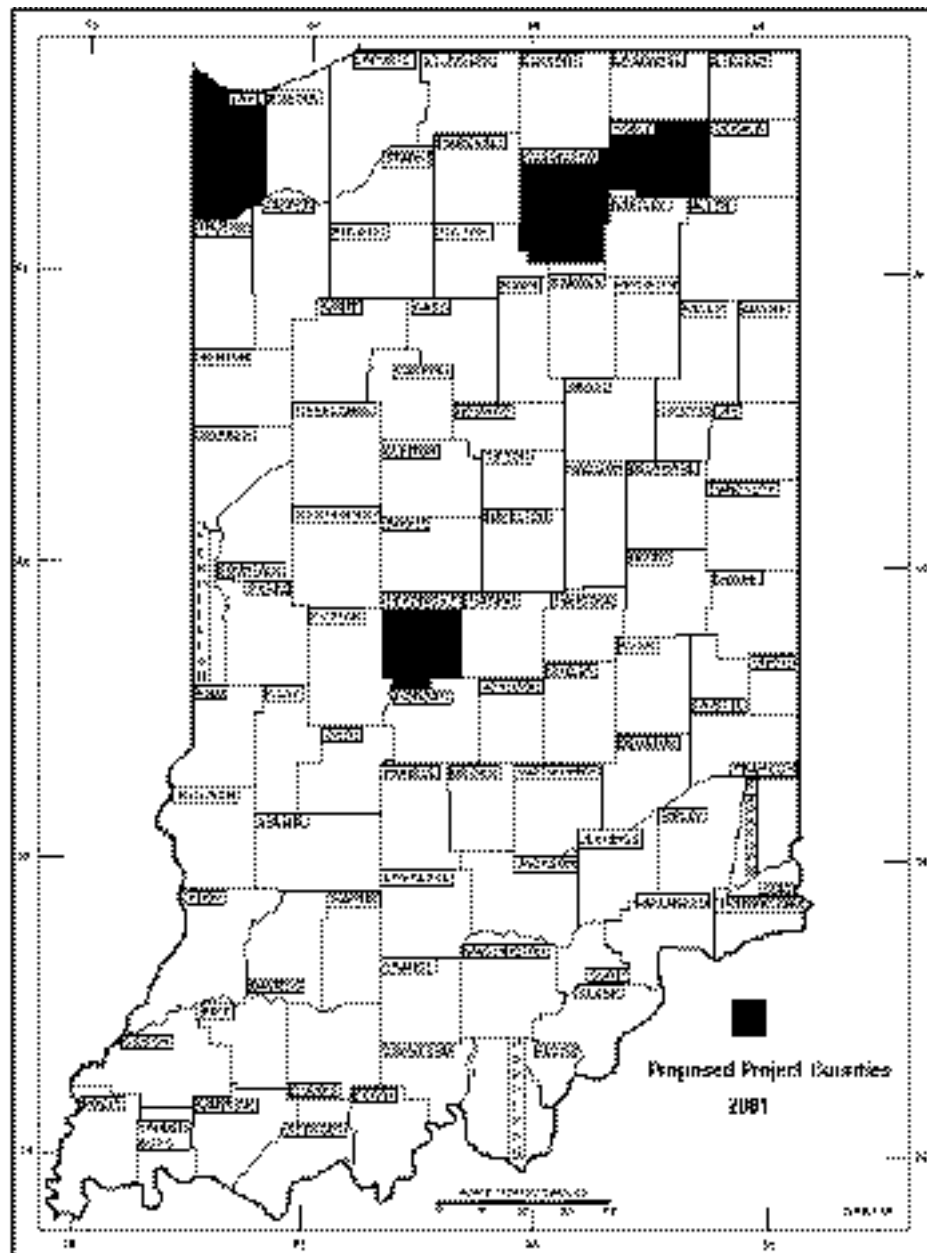


DECISION NOTICE & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Cooperative Gypsy Moth Project For Indiana 2001



**DECISION NOTICE
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**Cooperative Gypsy Moth Project
For Indiana
2001**

by

**Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry**

**Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Entomology & Plant Pathology**

**United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service**

**United States Department of Agriculture
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service**

April 2001

DECISION NOTICE AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

This document accompanies the Environmental Assessment (EA) titled “Cooperative Gypsy Moth Project for Indiana - 2001”, written by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The EA is a site-specific analysis of the potential effects of implementing the Cooperative Gypsy Moth Project for Indiana - 2001, which is referenced as the proposed action. The USDA-Forest Service (USFS) and USDA-Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) are proposing to provide both technical and financial assistance on this project. Procedures outlined by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) must be followed in order for federal assistance to be approved. The NEPA process provides a mechanism to identify 1) issues and concerns from the public, 2) reasonable and prudent alternatives for the proposed action, 3) potential environmental impacts of the alternatives, and 4) appropriate mitigation measures. In addition to the EA and this Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, the USDA requires that a Work and Safety Plan, and a Biological Evaluation also be approved before the project can be implemented.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

DNR, in cooperation with the USDA, proposes treating five sites in Indiana. Mating disruption (pheromone flakes) would be used on four sites totaling 1,828 acres, and Btk, *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, would be used on one site totaling 39 acres. The objectives for this proposed action are to eradicate gypsy moth populations in the uninfested area and to slow-the-spread of gypsy moth populations in the transition area by eliminating reproducing populations from the proposed treatment sites.

Btk would be aerially applied twice in late April or May when larvae are first and second instars in accordance with label directions. Pheromone flakes would be aerially applied in accordance with label directions during late June or early July just prior to male moth emergence. DNR would administer the overall operational and administrative aspects of the cooperative project. The USDA would cost-share on applications and provide technical assistance to the DNR.

DECISION

The EA discusses alternatives for treating gypsy moth populations in Indiana. The EA documents a site-specific environmental analysis conducted jointly by the DNR and the USDA for federally supported gypsy moth activities in 2001. The EA is tiered (40 CFR 1502.20; 1508.28) to the 1995 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) entitled “Gypsy Moth Management in the United States: a cooperative approach” (USDA 1995). The EA includes a site-specific discussion of:

1. Purpose and need for action
2. Alternatives, including the proposed action
3. Affected environment

4. Environmental consequences

The four alternatives that were considered in detail in this analysis were:

1. No Action
2. Btk
3. Mating disruption
4. Btk or mating disruption

Based upon the analysis documented in this EA and the FEIS, it is our decision that the objectives of the proposed action and the needs of the people of Indiana are best met by Alternative 4. This alternative is compatible with the preferred alternative discussed in the FEIS and selected in the Record of Decision, January 1996.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The general policy of the USFS is to protect forest-related values from damaging insect and disease outbreaks. This policy stems from the Plant Protection Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. section 7701), the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, as amended (P.L. 95-313), which incorporates provisions of the Forest Pest Control Act of 1947, and the Cooperation with State Agencies in Administration and Enforcement of Certain Federal Laws (7 U.S.C. section 450). These laws provide for federal and state cooperation in forest insect and disease management. The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act has been amended by the Forest Stewardship Act of 1990 (Farm Bill, P.L. 101-624) and grants authority to the Secretary of Agriculture to assist state officials through cooperative programs to control forest insects and diseases on non-federal forest lands of all ownerships. These programs have several purposes: (1) to enhance the growth and maintenance of trees and forests, (2) to promote the stability of forest-related industries, and associated employment, through the protection of forest resources, (3) to conserve forest cover on watersheds, shelterbelts, and windbreaks, (4) to protect outdoor recreation opportunities and other forest resources, and (5) to extend timber supplies by protecting wood products, stored wood, and wood in use.

The USDA Departmental Gypsy Moth Policy (USDA 1990) assigns the USFS and APHIS the responsibility to assist states in protecting non-federal lands from gypsy moth damage. On January 16, 1996, Joan M. Comanor, Deputy Chief of the USFS for State and Private Forestry, and Donald F. Husnick, Deputy Administrator of APHIS for Plant Protection and Quarantine, signed a Record of Decision (ROD) (USDA 1996) for the FEIS. The FEIS and ROD document the decision by USDA to support eradication, slow-the-spread, and suppression strategies for gypsy moth management. The ROD and FEIS specify that implementation of this alternative will require the completion of site-specific analyses conducted in accordance with NEPA and the environmental policy and procedures of the USDA (USDA 1996, p.1).

Our decision to choose Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative is based upon compliance with and the authority granted by the federal laws and regulations previously described and with USDA policy. This project complies with the Forest Pest Management Control Project Standards as described in the USFS Manual (FSM 3430) and the Cooperative Control Project Participation Criteria as described in Chapter 10 of the USFS Handbook (FSH 3409.11). This project conforms with USFS policy to protect and preserve the forest resources of the nation against destructive forest insects and diseases (USDA 1995, Vol. II, p. 1-3).

We did not choose the other alternatives for the following reasons:

Alternative 1 – This alternative was not selected because it does not meet our responsibility to assist the state of Indiana in protecting non-federal lands from gypsy moth damage, nor does it support the general USFS policy of protecting forest-related values from damaging insect and disease outbreaks. This alternative is likely to result in more rapid spread of gypsy moth to neighboring counties in Indiana.

Alternative 2 – Low isolated gypsy moth population levels in three counties (Hendricks, Kosciusko and Lake) are suitable for the use of mating disruption in fragmented host type (rural woodlots and urban forests). Thus, Btk was not selected.

Alternative 3 – Gypsy moth population level in Noble County is above the normal threshold for application of mating disruption. Thus, mating disruption is likely to be less effective than Btk in this site.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

We have reviewed the EA and carefully considered the issues and concerns expressed by the citizens of Indiana. Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the EA, we have determined that implementing this decision in the manner described will not cause significant environmental impacts or adverse effects. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed for this project. This decision was made after considering the following factors:

There are no significant effects after considering context and intensity of the project (40 CFR 1508.27). Application of gypsy moth treatments would occur on approximately 1,867 forested acres in 4 counties. The site-specific EA evaluates the environmental consequences in that particular context. This is only a small portion of the total forested acres in these counties.

The intensity of any effects is minimal for the following reasons:

1. Impacts from the applications are limited to the treatment areas.
2. There is no indication that the general public will experience any adverse health or safety effects from mating disruption (USDA 1995, Vol III, p. 8-1 through 8-6) and Btk (USDA 1995, Vol III, p. 4-1 through 4-21)
3. Treatment materials will not affect wetlands or ecologically critical areas.
4. Treatment materials are not highly controversial and will help to maintain the quality of the environment as it existed prior to gypsy moth infestations. Disrupt II and Btk are registered for gypsy moth and will be applied according to label requirements. This meets the provisions of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act of 1947 (7 USC 136) as amended.
5. There are no known unique or unknown risks associated with this project.

6. The decision to proceed is based upon the results of a site-specific environmental analysis conducted in accordance with NEPA. Decisions regarding future actions will be made in a similar manner.
7. The FEIS analyzed and demonstrated that neither cumulative environmental nor human health risks are associated with the use of treatment materials.
8. The action will not affect any item listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss of destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. No rare, threatened or endangered species are known to occur within any treatment site.
10. The proposed action complies and is consistent with all federal, state and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. The action is a cooperative project that has been planned, funded and will be implemented by agencies representing federal and state governments.
11. The public will be notified prior to aerial application. Application of Btk will be suspended when school children are present outside. The hospital located within the one site will not be treated.

This analysis was performed in compliance with Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice, February 11, 1994). This project may be implemented after this document has been signed.

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